

699.d 17
2

A

LETTER

T O

Mr. *Thomas Chubb* :

Occasion'd by his late Book, Intitl'd

The TRUE GOSPEL

O F

JESUS CHRIST,

A S S E R T E D.

By *R. P.*

[Richard Parker]



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. STAGG, in *Westminster-Hall* ;

And Sold by J. ROBERTS, in *Warwick-Lane.*

M. DCC. XXXIX.

LETTER

TO

ALL THOSE CONCERNED

IN THE GOVERNMENT

OF THE COUNTRY

AND SEVERAL

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE



A
 LETTER
 TO
Mr. CHUBB.

S I R,

YOU have, in Terms so very serious and pathetick, recommended your TRUE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST ASSERTED, particularly to the Consideration of those, who, as your Style is, “ Esteem themselves, or are esteemed by others, “ to be Ministers of Jesus Christ, and Preachers “ of his Gospel ” ; that I cannot but suppose it will be some Satisfaction to you, to know the Sentiments of one of them, who professes to have read with Care, and examined with Candour your Work. But indeed a bare Gra-
 B tification

tification of Curiosity would neither excuse the Trouble I give you, nor myself. My Purpose is more extensive, more important: I hope to do some Service to the Cause of Christ, some to my Christian Brethren, some to yourself. You undertook to assert the true Gospel of Jesus Christ; but, upon the strictest Scrutiny I have been able to make, you appear to have greatly misrepresented it; and if I can convince you, that what I take to be Errors are indeed such, you will at once have an Opportunity of rectifying them, of undeceiving those Readers who are amused with Appearances instead of Realities, and of improving your own Conduct in time to come.

By the singular Equity of our Laws, and by the steady Integrity, Moderation and Wisdom of our Governors, we, who live in this Land of Liberty, are allowed a free Examination of Religion; and by this glorious Liberty we stand justly and eminently distinguished among the Nations of the Earth. — But has this no Bounds? Should it not be used with Decency, Prudence and Modesty? ——— A Regard and Reverence has ever been shewn by all Nations to the Religion of their Country: Some Deference is due to the Authority of wise and good Men, some to general Opinion and Esteem; nay, even general Prejudices and Mistake should, I think, be treated with Gentleness, and good Manners. Men, the most learned
the

the most judicious, tho' they ever so much intend, and believe that they are promoting Truth, and correcting Error, should yet propose Notions that are novel, and contradictory to the prevailing Sense of Mankind, with a modest Diffidence; as being conscious of the Imperfections of Human Understanding, and well knowing that our Passions are apt to mislead us, and that our Prejudices often cheat us with a delusive Shew of Reason.

SOCRATES, the great Light of *Greece*, judged it a Thing so difficult precisely to determine Truth, that he would in no case positively affirm: The greatest Genius that ever adorned this Nation, and perhaps the World, when he published his New Philosophy, tho' supported by the best human Means of Certainty, Experiments and Demonstrations, was as remarkable for his Modesty, as for his wonderful Discoveries.

EVEN in settling a Point of History or Chronology, or a Reading of a *Pagan* Author, or in delivering any speculative Doctrines of Philosophy, and the like; Rashness, Arrogance, and a dogmatical Positiveness, are very unseemly and distasteful: Surely then, the Modesty and Discretion of those Persons should be very conspicuous, who undertake to dictate, innovate, and reform in Matters of Religion; a Thing

of the utmost Moment and Concern to all Mankind !

IN your Preface, Sir, you address your Readers in these Words: “ *I have* in the following Tract *shewn* you, what was the great End and the professed Design of our Lord Jesus Christ’s coming into the World.” — Again, “ *I have* likewise *shewn* you, what Method Christ took, and the Means he made use of, in order to obtain that End.” — Once more, “ *I have* also *shewn* you, what is strictly and properly the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.” And, *page* 19. “ *This* is the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.” —

ARE you then so very sure that you have rightly settled these most important Points? Are you not aware, that you have the general Voice of the whole Body of Christians against you, for above seventeen Ages? Doth the Judgment of very many wise, learned and virtuous Men, pass for nothing? — Exercise your Reason as much as you please, examine the holy Scriptures with all Freedom, and publish the Result of your Inquiries to the World ; but still remember, that God has given the Talent of Reason to the rest of Mankind, as well as to you ; and that they were neither all Fools, nor all Knaves, who, from the Days of the Apostles till now, have been employed in studying and expounding the Holy Scriptures.

I ENTER-

I ENTERTAIN so good an Opinion of you, as not to doubt your Belief that the Scheme you have given of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is true; but I am full of Wonder that you could ever so far impose upon yourself, nor can I tell how to account for it, otherwise than by supposing that you, after the Fashion of certain learned Critics, have been more attentive to what you judged the Gospel of Christ should have been, than to what it really is. To be plain, you seem to me to have formed to yourself a Standard of true Revelation beforehand, and then to have forced the Gospel of Christ to suit with your Standard.

THE first Step necessary for ascertaining the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, one would think, should be to inquire, Where it is to be found: Whether in the four Gospels alone, or in the whole Canon of the New Testament alone; or in the four Gospels, or whole Canon of the New Testament, as connected with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. But you, without any Proof or Examination that I can find, take for granted, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be learned from "the History of his Life and Ministry alone" (pag. 16, 20, 21.); and from those Parts of it only, that introduce him teaching his own Doctrine. For thus you write: "The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not an historical Account
" of

“ of Matters of Fact: As thus; Christ suf-
 “ fered, died, rose from the Dead, ascended
 “ into Heaven, &c. — Christ turned Water
 “ into Wine, gave Sight to the Blind, Feet to
 “ the Lame, Life to the Dead, &c. — The
 “ Gospel of Jesus Christ was that Doctrine
 “ which he preached, and not any History of
 “ Facts, which relate either to his Person or
 “ Ministry. — The Gospel of Jesus Christ
 “ is not any particular private Opinion of any,
 “ or of all the Writers of the History of his
 “ Life and Ministry; nor any private Opinion
 “ of any, or of all those whom he sent out to
 “ publish his Gospel to the World; nor is any
 “ of their Reasonings or Conclusions, founded
 “ on, or drawn from such Opinions, any Part
 “ of that Gospel” (pag. 43, 44, 45, 46.).
 These Passages plainly confine the Gospel of
 Christ to those Parts of the four Gospels, where-
 in he is represented teaching his own Doctrine.
 And this is a Position I can by no means grant:
 On the contrary, I contend, that the good
 Tidings, or good News, or Gospel of Jesus
 Christ, is to be had from the whole Canon of
 the New Testament compared with the Old
 Testament.

THE sacred Writings of the Old Testament
 contain a large Number of Types, Predictions
 and Prophecies, relating to a certain eminent
 Person called Messiah, or the Anointed, who
 was to appear in the World many Ages after.
 By these he is very distinctly characteriz'd:
 The

The Time and Place of his Birth are determined, the Lineage or Stock from which he was to spring, the good Tidings he was to preach, the violent Death he was to suffer, his Resurrection, and many other Circumstances. This Character of Messias, or Christ, the blessed Jesus expressly takes upon himself: Some of those Predictions and Prophecies he particularly applies to himself, and refers generally to them all. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,* says our Saviour, *because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor* [or, as it is in *Isaiab*, chap. lxi. 1. *To preach good Tidings unto the Meek*] ; *he hath sent me to heal the Broken-hearted, to preach Deliverance to the Captives, and Recovering of Sight to the Blind ; to set at Liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable Year of the Lord.*——*And he began to say unto them, This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears,* Luke iv. 18, 19, 21. And again in his Discourse with the Woman of Samaria, *The Woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: When he is come, he will tell us all Things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, am he,* John iv. 25, 26. So likewise, in his Answer to the High-priest: *Again the High-priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am,* Mark xiv. 61, 62. In these Passages, and several others that might be quoted, the holy Jesus declares himself to be the promised

mised Messiah. And, consistently with this, he refers frequently, in the Course of his Ministry, to the sacred Text of the Old Testament: *Search the Scriptures*, says he; *for in them ye think ye have eternal Life, and they are they which testify of me*, John v. 39. And, ver. 46. *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me*. And, speaking to his Apostles after his Resurrection, *He said unto them, These are the Words, which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all Things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me*, Luke xxiv. 44. And ver. 46. *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the Dead the third Day, and that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name, among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem*.

THESE Sayings of our Saviour, by him delivered at different Times of his Ministry, to me appear a sufficient Proof, that the Old Testament is closely connected with the Gospel of Christ; and that the latter cannot be understood without the former. How therefore you came to confine the good Tidings of Jesus Christ to the four Gospels only, and but to a small Part of them too, without taking notice of the Predictions and Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, is what I leave to yourself to explain. It may also
deserve

deserve your Consideration, whether this be reconcileable with what St. *Paul* declares to *Timothy*, that the holy Scriptures [of the Old Testament] were able to make him wise unto Salvation, *through Faith, which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. iii. 15.

BUT I say farther, that the whole Canon of the New Testament is likewise necessary to a right understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Apostles were by our Lord himself chosen, instructed, and sent to preach and propagate the Gospel. Of their Commission and Authority thus speaks he himself: *As Thou hast sent me into the World, even so have I also sent them into the World*, John xvii. 18. *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*, xx. 21. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*, Mat. x. 40. And to enable and animate them fully to execute their Apostleship, he promises to send the Holy Ghost to them after his Death. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may ~~be~~ abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth*, John xiv. 16, 17. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*, ver. 26. *I have yet many Things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all*
C Truth:

Truth : For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : And he will shew you Things to come, John xvi. 12, 13. And, after his Resurrection, enlarging their Commission, which before was confined to the Jewish Nation alone, (Mat. x. 5, 6.) he gives his last personal Instruction to them thus : Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Mat. xxviii. 19.

FROM hence it appears, that our Saviour appointed the Apostles to preach the Gospel, first to the *Jews*, and then to the *Gentiles*; and delegated to them the same Authority that he himself had: That, to enable them more effectually to propagate the Gospel, he promised to send to them, after his Death, the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, or Holy Ghost, which should abide with them for ever, should teach them *all Things*, should lead them into *all Truth*: That he had many Things to say to them, which, in his Life-time upon Earth, they could not bear; but that the Spirit of Truth, afterwards to come, would reveal them, and would, not only bring to their Remembrance whatsoever he had said to them, but also shew them Things to come.

Now every single Book of the New Testament was wrote either by an Apostle, or by
the

the Appointment and Approbation of an Apostle; so that they are all of the same divine Authority: Every one also of those Books was wrote in order to publish, or explain, or confirm the Gospel. Some Things relating to the Gospel are recorded in some of the sacred Books, that are not found in others: And some Things, by our Lord's express Promise, were to be revealed to the Apostles, which the Order of Time would not allow to be inserted in the History of what he said and did: From whence it follows, that the whole Canon of the New Testament is necessary to a right understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

BUT so little Reverence or Regard do you pay to the sacred Penmen and their Writings, that you scruple not to affirm, that it is a Matter of no Concern to us, whether what St. *Peter* has delivered, with respect to Christ's *preaching to the Spirits in Prison*, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. be true or false, pag. 45. And in the same Strain, speaking of the Account St. *James* gives of *Elias*, (Chap. v. 17, 18.) you say; "Whether it be true in fact, or not, it maketh nothing to us."—

THE Church of Christ is built upon a Rock, and is not to be shaken by such feeble Efforts.— It is a Matter of no Concern to us, say you, whether two of our Lord's Apostles have related Truth or Falshood.

But are we at all concerned, that Christ is come in the Flesh, that he has fulfilled the Scriptures, preached the Gospel, wrought Miracles, published the Doctrine of Salvation; that he died, rose from the Dead, and visibly ascended into Heaven? Are these Things of Importance? Why all, or next to all we know of them, comes from the Apostles, and rests wholly upon their Veracity. And if their History of these Things may be supposed false in any one Instance; why not in any, or every other? It will not suffice to answer, That the Doctrine taught by Jesus, is in its own Nature so good and excellent, that it abundantly recommends itself to every Man's Approbation. For, as no one could certainly say, beforehand, what the all-wise God would reveal to Mankind; so neither could any one, afterwards, have collected, from the Doctrine alone, that it was a complete Revelation of his Will. However, let the Doctrine appear to be as singularly excellent as you please; still, where is the Stamp of divine Authority? How shall we know that the Messiah, foretold, and particularly described so many Ages before his Coming, has actually been made manifest to the World? And, allowing him to be come, what Assurance can we have that this is the very Doctrine by him taught? And farther, supposing this to be really the Doctrine of Jesus, how shall we be convinced, that he wrought Miracles, and fulfilled the Scriptures, and his

own Prophecies, in the Manner he is said to have done? Take away the Credit of the Apostles, and prove these Things who can: But their Credit must be effectually overthrown, if two of them may be supposed to have related any Thing false in the Passages you alledge: For the former of those Passages contains a Transaction of our Lord himself; the latter a Piece of History confirmed by him.

BUT this is not all. Our Lord himself authorized these Apostles, to preach and propagate the Gospel in his Name: And, for that very Purpose, promised to send the Holy Ghost *to guide them into all Truth*, John xvi. 13. And you yourself allow, that in his Mouth was no Guile (pag. 55.). Are these Things so? If they are; it can never be supposed, without Consequences subversive of Christianity, that these self-same Apostles have, under Pretence of publishing the Gospel, published Fables or Lyes to the World.— In short, Sir, *it mattereth* so much to us, that the Writings of the Apostles be according to Truth, that if they can be proved contrary to it, I see not how the Character of our blessed Saviour can be supported.

You go on to invalidate the Credit of the Apostles, and their Writings, in the Words following, pag. 46. “ The Gospel of Jesus Christ
“ is not any particular private Opinion of any,
“ or

“ or of all the Writers of the History of his
 “ Life and Ministry; nor any private Opinion
 “ of any or of all those whom he sent out to
 “ publish his Gospel to the World; nor is any
 “ of their Reasonings or Conclusions, founded
 “ on, or drawn from such Opinions, any Part of
 “ that Gospel. Thus St. *John* begins his History,
 “ *John* i. 1, 2, 3. *In the Beginning was the*
 “ *Word, and the Word was with God, and*
 “ *the Word was God. The same was in the*
 “ *Beginning with God. All Things were made*
 “ *by him; and without him was not any Thing*
 “ *made, that was made.* These Propositions,
 “ for any thing that appears to the contrary,
 “ are only the private Opinion of St. *John*,
 “ who wrote the History of Christ’s Life and
 “ Ministry; and they are no Part of Christ’s
 “ Gospel.—To say in this Case, that St. *John*
 “ was divinely inspired in writing his History,
 “ is (for any thing that appears) groundlessly
 “ to presume a Point which is void of Proof.”

THAT the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not
 any particular private Opinion, or any Reasonings or Conclusions of any, or of all the Apostles, I readily grant: But that the sacred Text of the New Testament is the private Opinion, or Reasoning, or Conclusion of the Writers; this I, in Concurrence with the general Voice of the Church of Christ in all Ages, and all Countries, absolutely deny. Those venerable Records of the Christian Faith, I
 maintain

maintain to have been wrote by divine Inspiration, *i.e.* by the Guidance and Influence of the Comforter, or Spirit of Truth, or Holy Ghost. The full and direct Proof of this, would be a Field too large at present: I shall therefore content myself with Arguments *ad Hominem*, taking only this as a *Postulatum*, which you yourself have taken, and built your whole Book upon; namely, that what is represented in the Gospels, as spoken by our Lord himself, was really, in Substance at least, so spoken, and is true. Taking this for granted, I argue thus :

WHEN our blessed Saviour sent forth his twelve Disciples to preach the Gospel through *Judea*; for that general Purpose, he gave them the Power of working Miracles: But for the particular Purpose of defending themselves and their Doctrine before Councils, and Governors, and Kings, he assures them of a temporary Assistance of the Holy Spirit : *But when they deliver you up, take no Thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same Hour what ye shall speak: For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you,* Mat. x. 19, 20. Or, as St. Mark has it, Chap. xiii. 11. *But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no Thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: But whatsoever shall be given you in that*

that Hour, that speak ye: For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. Here is a plain and undeniable Proof of the Holy Spirit's speaking in the Apostles, upon particular Occasions. The Words quoted are our Saviour's own; and they are so full and expressive of a divine Inspiration, that how they can fairly bear any other Construction, I know not. Well, does our Lord engage to support his Apostles, in a remarkable Exigency, with the divine Counsel and Instinct of the Holy Ghost? And is it not then a just and natural Inference, that where the Case was at least as important, the Necessity as urgent, and the Difficulty as apparent; that there the like extraordinary Influences and Assistances were afforded? And nobody, I imagine, can doubt, but that to commit the Gospel to Writing, in order to publish, establish, and preserve it among the Nations of the World, was as important, necessary, and difficult, as to defend it before Kings, and Potentates, and human Tribunals.

FARTHER, upon Supposition of the Reality and Infallibility of our Lord's Promises, as they are related in the Gospels, the Argument rises from Probability to direct positive Proof. For in the Passage of St. *John* above-cited our Lord assures his Disciples in Terms most clear and significant, that he would send the Holy Ghost to them, after his Death, *to guide them into all Truth; to bring to their Remembrance*

brance all Things whatsoever he had said unto them ; and to shew them Things to come. This Promise is exprefs and full to the Point, and will, alone, bear the whole Weight of this Doctrine of the divine Inspiration of the Apostles, in publishing and propagating the Gospel : For if, to guide into all Truth, to bring to Remembrance Things past, and to shew Things to come, by the Holy Ghost, be not divine Inspiration, I am quite at a Loss to know what is.

NEVERTHELESS, for the sake of shewing the Harmony and Correspondence of the Books of the New Testament, I shall produce some other Parts of them relating to this Matter. Of the Prophetick Scriptures of the Old Testament, thus speaks St. Peter : *No Prophecy of the Scripture is of any private Interpretation (it should be Utterance). For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man : But holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,* 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. In like manner St. Paul, *All Scripture is given by INSPIRATION of God,* 2 Tim. iii. 16. And what, in the Name of Truth, hinders, but that we may rightly conclude the divine Inspiration of the New Testament, from that of the Old? Of the Descent and Influences of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, thus we read, *Acts ii. 4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other*
D *Tongues*

Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance
 Here the Apostles are represented speaking Foreign Languages, which before they knew not, by the Power of the Spirit: And, methinks, we shall not want strong Probability to support us, if we suppose them to have written, as well as spoken, by the Direction of the Holy Ghost. To this Purpose likewise, the Manner in which St. *Peter* speaks of the Writings of St. *Paul* deserves particular Notice: *Even as our beloved Brother Paul also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, 2 Pet. iii. 15. According to the Wisdom given unto him*—Do not these Words seem to import that divine Inspiration I am defending? At least, do they not appear inconsistent with a Supposition, that the Writings of St. *Paul* were his particular private Opinion, or Reasonings, or Conclusions?—But allowing that they may possibly bear another Interpretation; yet surely they may very well bear this. Lastly, it is observable, that St. *Paul*, treating of Marriage, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. vii. when he speaks of Divorcement, a Thing fully determined by Christ himself, uses singular Force and Emphasis of Expression: *I command, yet not I, but the Lord*, ver. 10. And distinguishes what he himself teaches from what his blessed Master had decided, during his Ministry upon Earth: *But so the rest speak I, not the Lord*, ver. 12. *I have no Commandment of the Lord*, i.e. it is not

not revealed to me, that the Lord Jesus ever spoke to this Point; yet *I give my Judgment*, ver. 25. But tho' St. Paul only says, *I speak, I give my Judgment*; yet is he far enough from meaning, that he was not then directed by divine Inspiration; he seems to me only to express his Modesty, and profound Reverence to his great Master. For he closes the Chapter with these remarkable Words: *But she is happier if she so abide, after my Judgment; and I think also, that I have the Spirit of God.* The common Exposition of these Texts is, that St. Paul there distinguishes the Things convey'd to him by express Revelation, from the Determinations of his own Judgment. And if this Sense be thought better, still the divine Inspiration of the Apostle will stand, unless in the Instances by himself excepted.

As to the Passage of St. John's Gospel, by you cited, as being only his private Opinion, I have some Things to offer, which will, I trust, convince you, that you have pronounc'd Sentence, before you knew or considered the Evidence. And, first, You take for granted, what ought not in Reason to be required, because it is neither plain in itself, nor can be proved: Namely, that the Evangelists have set down no Doctrine of Jesus Christ, but what they have represented spoken by himself. The Presumption, that they have always introduced our Lord teaching his own Doctrines,

because that is their general Plan or Manner of Writing, will sink very low, if a plain Exception to this Rule can be produced from their Histories.

THEREFORE, Secondly, I shall again quote some very remarkable Words of our Lord, out of his solemn Exhortation to his Apostles, just before he was betrayed: *I have yet many Things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all Truth,* John xvi. 12, 13. Please to weigh what our Lord here speaks, with the free and impartial Examination of a true Disciple of Reason; and I cannot doubt, but you will find, that the Doctrine delivered by St. *John*, in the Passage by you mentioned, may really be Part of the Doctrine of Christ; tho' by Christ himself not fully and explicitly taught, during his Ministry upon Earth. Nay, the Words, *Ye cannot bear them now*, to me seem necessarily to denote something above the common Pitch; Doctrines abstruse, Truths hidden and mysterious; fit only to be revealed unto them, and for them to reveal, when their Understanding was enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and their Faith established by the Sufferings, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of their blessed Master; by the Gift of Tongues they received, and the Miracles they so often wrought in his Name.

THIRDLY,

THIRDLY, If you compare the Passage of St. *John's* Gospel with the Doctrine our Lord himself taught, you may observe a greater Similitude and Relation than perhaps you are aware of. For my own Part, the more I turn in my Mind the following Parts of Scripture, all of them pronounced by our Saviour himself, the more am I confirmed in an Opinion, that they contain strong Hints and Intimations of the Doctrine recorded by St. *John*, more openly and amply, in the Passage under Consideration : *That all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, John v. 23. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am*, viii. 58. *I and my Father are one*, x. 30. *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also*, xiv. 7. *Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, xiv. 11. *All Things that the Father hath, are mine*, xvi. 15. *For thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World*, xvii. 24. Fourthly, I observe, that St. *Paul* (who most expressly declares, *He received not the Gospel of Man, neither was taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Galat. i. 12.) preached and wrote to the Churches under his Care Doctrine extremely like, if not the very same as St. *John* : This you may see by the following Texts : — *God, who created all Things by Jesus Christ*, Ephes. iii. 9. *Who being in the Form of God, thought it not Rob-*
bery

bery to be equal with God : But made himself of no Reputation, — Philip. ii. 6, 7. Who is the Image of the invisible God, the First-born of every Creature : For by him were all Things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers ; all Things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all Things, and by him all Things consist. And he is the Head of the Body the Church ; who is the Beginning, the First-born from the Dead ; that in all Things he might have the Preeminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell, Colof. i. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. For in him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily, Colof. ii. 9.*

I HAVE been the more copious, in considering the Authority of the Books of the New Testament, and their Connection with the Old Testament ; as well, because I take these to be Points so important, that Christianity must stand or fall with them, as because their Establishment must, by necessary and unavoidable Consequence, be the Downfal of your Scheme.

HOWEVER, I will now take a View of your Representation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, — ~~as I~~ find it in the second Section ; where you

* Compare Romans ix. 5.

professedly

professedly undertake to give a Summary of it.
 There you say, "That Jesus Christ applies
 " himself to Men, as free Beings, who have
 " the Direction of their own Actions; and
 " as such, he lays before them, and recom-
 " mends to their most serious Consideration,
 " certain doctrinal Propositions founded upon
 " the Supposition of a Deity; which because
 " of their great Importance to Mankind,
 " and their being very little attended to, are
 " called the good News, or the Gospel. And
 " as these Propositions were in a particular
 " and special manner recommended by Christ
 " to publick Consideration, and as he was par-
 " ticularly and specially appointed to perform
 " that Work, they are therefore called the
 " Gospel of Jesus Christ." Then having
 mentioned the End Christ had, in recom-
 mending these doctrinal Propositions, you go
 on thus: "And a well-grounded Persuasion
 " of those Truths thus becoming a Principle
 " of Action in Men, (as aforesaid) is called
 " believing the Gospel, and believing in Jesus
 " Christ." Those doctrinal Propositions you
 then reduce to three Heads, in the Words fol-
 lowing. "First, He (Christ) requires and
 " recommends the conforming our Minds and
 " Lives to that eternal and unalterable Rule of
 " Action, which is founded in the Reason of
 " Things, (which Rule is summarily contained
 " in the written Word of God) and this he
 " lays down as the only Ground of divine
 " Acceptance,

“ Acceptance, and as that which will entitle
 “ Men to the Favour of God, and the Hap-
 “ piness of another World; and consequently
 “ this will prevent them from being greatly
 “ and lastingly miserable. Secondly, If Men
 “ have lived in a Violation of this righteous
 “ Law, by which they have rendered them-
 “ selves highly displeasing to God, and worthy
 “ of his Resentment; then Christ requires and
 “ recommends Repentance and Reformation
 “ of their evil Ways, as the only and the sure
 “ Ground of the divine Mercy and Forgive-
 “ ness. And, Thirdly, In order to make those
 “ Truths have the greater Impression on the
 “ Minds and Lives of Men, he declares, and
 “ assures them, That God has appointed a
 “ Day, in which he will judge the World in
 “ Righteousness; and that he will then either
 “ acquit or condemn, reward or punish them,
 “ according as they have or have not con-
 “ formed their Minds and Lives to that Rule
 “ of Righteousness before-mentioned; and
 “ according as they have or have not repented
 “ and amended their evil Ways. This is the
 “ true Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

If this be a just Summary of the Gospel
 of Jesus Christ, the Writings of the New
 Testament must, for aught I see, appear to an
 attentive and intelligent Reader a perfect Chaos
 of Inconsistencies: So far must those holy Books
 be from being received as a divine Revelation,
 that

that they cannot, in that Case, be esteemed the Composition of Men commonly honest and prudent. But, Thanks be to God, this Deformity is only owing to a false View of them: They are in themselves really beautiful and uniform, the gracious Offspring of the Spirit of Truth. This I will not barely affirm; I intend to prove it; prove it, as it ought to be proved; not by culling a Scrap or two from the sacred Writings, and interpreting them as detached and independent of the whole; but by considering the Signification or Significations of the Word Gospel, throughout the New Testament.

I BEGIN, according to the Order of Time, with the Angel's Message to the Shepherds. *Fear not: For behold I *bring you good Tidings of great Joy, which shall be to all People; for unto you is born this Day in the City of David, a Saviour; which is Christ the Lord,* Luke ii. 10, 11. Here the Gospel in the Sense of the holy Angel evidently signifies, that the Messiah is born into the World, and that Jesus is He.

WE go on next to the publick and professed Preaching of the Gospel; which is plainly said to have begun from *John the Baptist: The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son*

* Ευαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν χαρὰν μεγάλην.

E

of

of God; as it is written in the Prophets, Behold, I send my Messenger before thy Face, which shall prepare thy Way before thee, &c. Mark i. 1, 2. The Law and the Prophets were until John: Since that Time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every Man presseth into it, Luke xvi. 16. Let us see then what it was the Baptist preached: Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, Mat. iii. 2. And under this it may be proper to set what he speaks expressly of our Lord: The next Day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World. This is He (the Christ, see ver. 15, 25, 26, 27) of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me: For he was before me, John i. 29, 30. — That he should be made manifest to Israel; therefore am I come baptizing with Water, ver. 31. Upon these Texts thus laid together, I observe, First, That the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be the doctrinal Propositions you assign; because John the Baptist is plainly said to have preached the Gospel, and yet does not appear to have taught those Propositions. Secondly, That since John did preach the Gospel, and declared Jesus to be the Christ, and said, that the Intent of his Coming was to make Jesus manifest to Israel; hence we have a very strong Presumption, that the Gospel which he preached, was really the Advent of the Messiah in the Person of Jesus.

SOON after the Imprisonment of St. *John*, the Gospel was preached by our Lord himself. And what was it he preached? The very same as the Baptist. *From that Time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent : For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, Mat. iv. 17. Or, as St. *Mark* has it : *Now after that John was put in Prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, The Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand : Repent ye, and believe the Gospel*, Mark i. 14, 15. Here I remark by the Way: First, That the Gospel of Jesus Christ is contained in these Words, whatever their Sense be : *The Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand*. Secondly, That the said Gospel cannot be the doctrinal Propositions you mention ; because Repentance is one of them, which is here unquestionably distinguished from the Gospel : *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel*.

FARTHER, Our Lord not only preach'd the Gospel himself, but likewise sent forth his Disciples to preach it, during his Ministry upon Earth : And therefore the Instructions given to them will be a necessary Part of our present Inquiry. To the twelve Apostles he speaks thus : *As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, Mat. x. 7. And to the seventy Disciples he gives his Directions thus : *Into whatsoever City ye enter — heal*
E 2 *the*

the Sick that are therein; and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you, Luke x. 8, 9. These are all the Passages that I can recollect in the four Gospels, which professedly declare the Purport of the Gospel or good News of Jesus Christ: And we find it to be, that *the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. It remains then, in order to discover the true and proper Signification of the Gospel, that we inquire what is to be understood by those Words.

To this Purpose it is to be noted, that the Messiah is spoken of in the Prophecies of the Old Testament as a King, a Prince, a Ruler, and a Founder of an everlasting Kingdom of Righteousness. So *Isaiah: Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder: And his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the Increase of his Government and Peace, there shall be no End; upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with Judgment and with Justice, from henceforth even for ever,* Isaiah ix. 6, 7. And the Prophet *Micah: But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the Thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel: Whose Goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,* Micah v. 2. And the Prophet *Zechary,*
Behold,

Behold, thy King cometh unto thee : He is just, and having Salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Ass, and upon a Colt the Foal of an Ass, Zechary ix. 9. But above all, the Prophet Daniel most expressly : I saw in the Night-Visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages should serve him : His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed, Dan. vii. 13, 14. Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City, to finish the Transgression, and to make an End of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness, and to seal up the Vision and Prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven Weeks, ix. 24, 25. These and the other Prophecies relating to the same Subject, had rais'd in the Jews an high Expectation of the Messiah, at the time our Lord came into the World. Nay, so much had the Fame of his coming at that time spread through the Nations of the East, that it is particularly taken notice of by the Roman Historians. And these Prophecies are, in the Angel's
Salutation

Salutation to the Virgin Mary, applied to Jesus: *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy Womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his Name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. And he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no End*, Luke i. 31, 32, 33. Hence it seems pretty evident, that the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God, mentioned in the Passages above, is the same as the Kingdom of the Messiah; and that when the Kingdom of Heaven is said to be at hand, the Meaning is, that the Messiah is come, to make known and to establish the Kingdom described by the Prophets. But, in farther Proof of this, it is observable, that the Kingdom of God is sometimes said to be come unto, and to be among Men; and this, when, from the Circumstances, the Advent of the Messiah plainly appears to be intended. When our Lord had healed the Person *possessed with a Devil, blind and dumb* — *all the People were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?* So the Jews commonly called the Messiah. Hereupon the Pharisees objected, that he did not *cast out Devils, but by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*. And Part of our Lord's Reply is in these Words: *If I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you.* Which is as much as to say, I am the Son of David, or Messiah descended

descended from *David*, as you suppose, *Mat. xii. 22, 23, 24, 28.* Again, *When he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come; he answered them, and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here, or, Lo there; for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within (among) you, Luke xvii. 20, 21, i. e.* according to my Exposition, the Messiah is already come, and is amongst you. This Sense seems to be supported by the Words in the Verse next following: *The Days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the Days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it.* I conclude therefore, from the Accounts we have in the four Gospels, compared with the Prophecies of the Old Testament, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in its strict original Sense, is this: That the Messiah is come, to make known and establish the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God, foretold and described in the Old Testament; and that Jesus is he.

BUT we may give still more Strength and Illustration to this Matter, by inquiring how the Apostles, or their Assistants, preached the Gospel after our Lord's Ascension. For we shall find, that the grand Point, which they constantly labour and inculcate in preaching the Gospel, is, that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ. I shall content myself with a few Instances; because the Notoriety of the Fact makes
many

many needlers. *And daily in the Temple, and in every House, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ, Acts v. 42.* When Philip (peculiarly styled the Evangelist, *Acts xxi. 8.*) went down to the City of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them, *Acts viii. 5.* the Purport of his Preaching may be clearly collected from ver. 12. *But when they believed Philip preaching the Things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized.* The same Philip preached Jesus to the *Ethiopian Eunuch*, ver. 35. And what he preached is most evident, from what the Eunuch declares, ver. 37. *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* St. Peter, preaching the Gospel to Cornelius, explains the Word which God sent unto the Children of Israel, preaching Peace by Jesus Christ, *Acts x. 36.* His Explanation is this: *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with Power*, ver. 38. *Preaching the Word, and preaching the Lord Jesus*, are used as synonymous Terms, *Acts xi. 19, 20.* And we read of St. Paul, that, after his Conversion, straightway he preached Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God—and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ, *Acts ix. 20, 22.* To which it may be proper to add, that the same Apostle, speaking of the Faith of Abraham, says, that the Gospel was preached to him, when that grand Promise was made to him,
That

That in him, or in his Seed, all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, Galat. iii. 8. Upon the whole then, I take it to be a clear Case, that the primary Sense of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as preached by the Baptist, our Lord himself, or his Apostles, is the Advent of the Messiah in the Person of Jesus, for the Purposes foretold and determined in the Prophecies of the Old Testament.

BUT tho' this be the original Signification of the Gospel, yet is there another more comprehensive and general one, frequently to be found in the New Testament. What is strictly called the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is so closely connected with his Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Miracles, Prophecies, and Doctrine, and their several Circumstances, that it is, with great Propriety, extended to all those. Sometimes one indeed, sometimes more of them, are particularly mentioned, or chiefly intended, under the Name of the Gospel, just as the Nature of the Argument or Narration requires. But whenever that Word is so used, the whole System of Christianity seems beyond Doubt always to be understood. I give you these Examples out of many. The Gospel, in the Front of the four Books so intituled, plainly denotes the History of all Things relating to our Saviour, till after his Ascension. And in these Words, * *Because he*

* ὅτι τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν αὐτοῖς εὐηγγελίζετο.

F

preached

preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection, Acts xvii. 18. the Whole of Christianity is implied in the Name of Jesus ; and yet the Resurrection expressed as a Part of it. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the Things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you, 1 Pet. i. 12. In this Text, what the Prophets foretold of the Messiah, is chiefly considered as the Gospel ; but the Whole of Christianity is, and must be necessarily understood. Moreover, Brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel, which I preached unto you ; which also you have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in Memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received ; how that Christ died for our Sins, according to the Scriptures ; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third Day, according to the Scriptures ; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve, 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Here the Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Appearance of Christ to his Disciples, are called the Gospel, tho' the rest of Christianity is certainly understood. And it is worth your Notice, that when St. Paul explains the Gospel he had preached to the Corinthians, he mentions several Articles, but not at all the Doctrine of Christ, which you pretend to be the Whole of the Gospel. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with

*with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thes. i. 7, 8. Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous Man, but for the Lawless and Disobedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners, for Unholy and Profane, &c. — according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my Trust, 1 Tim. i. 9, 10, 11. Only let your Conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, Philip. i. 27. In all these Texts the Doctrine is chiefly intended, the whole System of Christianity necessarily implied. Striving together for the Faith of the Gospel, Philip. i. 27. The Belief in Jesus Christ is here principally meant. * And we declare unto you glad Tidings, how that the Promise which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their Children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, Acts xiii. 32, 33. Remember that Jesus Christ, of the Seed of David, was raised from the Dead, according to my Gospel, 2 Tim. ii. 8. Here, contrary to an Assertion of yours, above quoted, and anon to be considered, the Resurrection of our Lord is expressly mentioned under the Title of the Gospel: And yet every Body will allow other Things to be understood. In the Day when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel,*

* Καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελίζομεθα, &c.

Rom. ii. 16. Our Lord's future Coming to Judgment is here spoken of in the same manner as his Resurrection above.

THIS larger Sense therefore of the Gospel appears to have its Foundation in Scripture; and this, I suppose, is what Christians commonly mean, when they speak of the Gospel: And it is what I generally mean in the Course of this Epistle.

I HAVE now finished the Inquiry I proposed, and persuade myself, that the Account given above of the Gospel, is the true one; fairly deduced from many plain Passages of Holy Writ. So it appears to me: And yet that it certainly is so, I am far from affirming. But, be that as it will; that your Scheme cannot be right, is, I apprehend, exceedingly evident from several Texts there quoted, with which it seems totally irreconcilable. But to come closer to the Point, I will bring the whole Matter to this short Issue: You maintain, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the same as his Doctrine; and that Doctrine you undertake to reduce to three general Propositions, at the End of your second Section. Now, I will suppose at present, but by no means grant, that the said Propositions do contain the Substance of all our Lord's true Doctrine; And, having done this, I may, with a good Grace, call upon you to produce so much as one plain and unexceptionable Passage
out

out of the four Gospels, (for to those you confine the true Gospel of Jesus Christ) wherein the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, singly and seperately, as distinguished (they are your own Words, pag. 45.) from "any History of Facts, " which relate either to his Person or Ministry"; wherein, I say, his Doctrine, so distinguished, is either expressly declared, or necessarily implied, to be his Gospel. But as the Discovery of Truth is all I aim at, all I wish; I wave that Advantage, if it be one; and, giving you full Scope, desire you to find, if you can, any one such Instance, from the first Verse of St. *Matthew*, to the last of the *Revelation*.

IF my State of the Gospel be right, it must follow of course, that believing the Gospel, and believing in Jesus Christ, is not, as you pretend "a well-grounded Persuasion of the " doctrinal Propositions above-mentioned, becoming a Principle of Action in Men"; but it is a thorough Conviction of the Mind, that the Messiah is come, and that Jesus is the Messiah. You confound the Means, and the End; which are Things very different, and ought carefully to be distinguished. Belief in Jesus Christ is required, in order to give Sanction, Authority, and Acceptance to his Doctrine, and thereby Happiness to Mankind here and hereafter. But then it is to be noted, that this Belief is a Mean to an End, as one Virtue is

is to another ; as Temperance to Sobriety, and Sobriety to Chastity. For it has the Nature of moral Virtue considered in itself, and apart from the End : It implies an honest, sincere, and unprejudiced Mind ; a Mind open to Truth, and obedient to Reason : It argues a deep Sense of the Supreme Being, a Trust in his Promises, and Willingness to know and do his Will. These Things, I say, are necessarily included in a rational Belief, that Jesus is the Christ : A Belief founded upon full and sufficient Evidence, but opposed by Prejudices of Education and Custom, by Bigotry, Superstition and worldly Interest, when it was first published ; and by the scandalous Abuses, and miserable Projects, to which it has been since, and still is prostituted, by the Depravity of Mankind.

FAITH in Christ, considered simply in its own Nature, and as being introductory to his Laws, and the Rewards annexed, is frequently spoken of by our blessed Saviour in Terms of high Approbation. This the following Passages, I suppose, will clearly evince : *When Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a Centurion beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my Servant lieth at home sick of the Palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The Centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof : But speak the Word only, and my Servant shall be healed.—*

When

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel.—Go thy Way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee, Mat. viii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13. Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good Comfort; thy Faith hath made thee whole, Mat. ix. 22. And behold, a Woman of Canaan came out of the same Coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my Daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil.—Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O Woman, great is thy Faith: Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt, Mat. xv. 22, 28. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all Things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the Father of the Child cried out, and said with Tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine Unbelief, Mark ix. 23, 24. When Jesus departed thence, two blind Men followed him, crying and saying, Thou Son of David, have Mercy on us.—And Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their Eyes, saying, According to your Faith, be it unto you, Mat. ix. 27, 28, 29. Now I will not so far mis-spend Time and Paper, as to set about proving, that the Faith or Belief mentioned in these Texts, is, that Jesus is the Messiah, or Son of David, and, as such, able to perform the Miracles there recorded:

corded: The Case seems too clear to need formal Proof; but whether that be the Sense of those Texts, or not; still, I contend, that they stand in direct Opposition to your Explanation, above quoted, of believing the Gospel, and believing in Jesus Christ. Compare them with that Explanation; use all the Arts of Criticism you can, strain them to the very utmost; and I dare undertake, you will never be able to make good Language and good Sense of them, upon your Principles.

I HAVE said thus much upon the Belief of the Gospel, and of Jesus Christ, not barely to confute your Notion; but to give what Light I could to a momentous Point, in my humble Judgment frequently treated of with no small Inconsistence and Confusion. Had I intended only to confute, that, I think, might have been done by a shorter and easier Method: As thus: "A well-grounded Persuasion, say you, of those Truths, (*i.e.* doctrinal Propositions) thus becoming a Principle of Action in Men, is called believing the Gospel, and believing in Jesus Christ," p. 17. And again: "To believe in Christ, is the same, as to believe the Gospel, or the good News (*i.e.* the doctrinal Propositions) which Christ proclaimed to the World; and both imply such a serious and well-grounded Persuasion of those Truths, as becomes a Principle of Action in the Believer, and rightly directs
his

“ his Mind and Life,” p. 25. When I compare these Paragraphs with what you say, and suppose, and deliver as your settled Opinion in other Places; I can in no sort discover that Agreement and Uniformity which might be expected from *an Asserter of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Your Notion, if I understand it, is this: The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the same as his Doctrine, and that Doctrine is the same in Substance, as three Propositions by you assigned at pag. 18; and such a well-grounded Persuasion of that Doctrine, or those doctrinal Propositions, as hath a due Influence upon the Mind and Life of a Man, is the same as believing the Gospel, and believing in Jesus Christ. This I take to be a just Representation of your Sense. Now you have asserted in several Parts of your Book, that we are not obliged to Jesus Christ for the Knowledge and Certainty of the said doctrinal Propositions, but only for their Revival and Recommendation. You say and suppose, that they were known both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, but generally, not universally, disregarded before the Coming of our Lord. And, if you will be consistent with yourself, you must upon the same Principles allow also, that they may even now be known, in the practical Manner you require, where the Name of Jesus Christ is not known. From whence, I apprehend, will flow some Consequences fully confirming what I have said above; but which will more clearly appear

by reducing the whole into one Argument thus: The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the same as his Doctrine, or your three doctrinal Propositions; and the Belief of Jesus Christ is the same as a practical Belief of his Doctrine, or your Propositions: But that Doctrine, or those Propositions, might have been practically known, and were so known, before the Coming of Jesus Christ; and may now be so known, where the Name of Jesus Christ is not known. Therefore a Person might have been as much a Believer in Jesus Christ before his Coming, as any Christian has been since; and a wild *Indian*, or a *Hottentot*, may now be a Believer in Jesus Christ, even before he hears him named, as much as any good Christian in all *Christendom*.

THESE Consequences, I presume, are a sufficient Evidence, that more Attention, more Deliberation, more Accuracy was due to this important Subject than you have bestowed upon it. I shall conclude this Point by asking you a Question or two: First, If it be not your Opinion, that there are in the World certain Persons called *Deists*, who believe your doctrinal Propositions in the practical manner you mention; and yet at the same time look upon Jesus as an Impostor? Secondly, If you would think it good Sense, to call such Persons Believers in Jesus Christ?

THUS have I examined and stated the Authority of the sacred Books of the New Testament,

ment, their Connection with, and Dependence upon the Old Testament; the Nature of the Gospel, and the Faith in Jesus Christ, with all the Care and Circumspection I have been able: And upon the whole, find them widely different from what you have represented them. If I am right, your Book must necessarily be founded in Error: And therefore, being perfectly regardless of a Superstructure raised upon such a Foundation, I should now take my leave; but that I think it conducive to the Ends proposed by this Letter, to shew, in a few Instances, how well you have interpreted and made Deductions from the Holy Scripture.

THE first Instance I shall take Notice of, is at pag. 34. I give it in your own Words: "And as he preached the Doctrines of Repentance, and Remission of Sins, to the Jews in his own Person; so he rose from the Dead *on purpose* that he might commission, and spirit, and send out the Apostles to preach the same Doctrines to the rest of Mankind. This is what he expressly declared to his Disciples: Saith he, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the Dead the third Day; and that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name among all Nations*, Luke xxiv. 46, 47." You repeat the same in Effect, at pag. 79.

BUT by what Rules of Language and Grammar you discover this Sense in these Words of our blessed Saviour, you best know: For my part, I am so far from admitting it, that it is my sincere Opinion you could not easily have picked out a Text less to your Purpose. For, 1st, I neither find it expressed, nor implied in this Text, that the Design of Christ's Resurrection was to commission, or spirit, or send out the Apostles to preach the Doctrines of Repentance, and Remission of Sins to Mankind: I cannot see any the most distant Hint of this. Our Lord having, in the Verses immediately preceding, reminded his Disciples of what he had formerly told them, *that all Things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him*; and having opened their Understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures he was speaking of; he then adds the Words in question, which, beyond all reasonable Doubt, I think, amount to this: Thus, you see, it is written in the Law of *Moses*, and in the Prophets and Psalms, and was therefore become absolutely necessary, that I should suffer, that I should rise from the Dead the third Day, and that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in my Name, &c. The Words, *that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name*, must in right Construc-
tion

tion be referred to *Thus it is written*, and *Thus it behoved*; as they stand below : *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved, that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name.* Had our Saviour's Meaning been as you conceit, the Particle *and* must have been left out, and the Words have run thus: * *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the Dead the third Day, that Repentance and Remission of Sins might be preached in his Name, among all Nations.* The original Words quoted below make this exceedingly clear. But, 2dly, So ill-fated is your Interpretation, that it is not only repugnant to all good Rules of Grammar and Criticism, but to our blessed Lord's plain Meaning and Design in this very Passage : " He rose from the Dead, say you, " *on purpose* that he might commission, and " spirit, and send out the Apostles to preach " the same Doctrines to the rest of Mankind." But what faith he himself? Why, that he rose from the Dead, because it was *so written, and so behoved.* It was to give Completion to the Scriptures, and a most strong Proof of his

* "Οὕτω γέγραπται, καὶ οὕτως ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν, καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν καὶ ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. — Had your Sense been intended, the Syntax must have been different; I imagine, this: — Καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, ἵνα κηρυχθῶσιν, ἢ, κηρυχθῇ ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοια καὶ ἀφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη,

Messiah-

Messiahship : Infomuch that the main Drift of his Discourse to his Disciples upon this Occasion, is to convince them of the Reality of his Resurrection, and of the Accomplishment of the Scriptures which foretold it: *For (according to St. John) as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the Dead,* John xx. 9. How strong a Proof of his divine Authority his Resurrection was, our Saviour himself, who best knew, has told us. When he drove the Traders out of the Temple, *the Jews said unto him, What Sign shewest thou, seeing that thou dost these Things? Jesus answered, and said unto them, Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up,* John ii. 18, 19. Here, you see, our Lord places the Proof of his divine Mission solely in his future Resurrection*. I do not say, that other Ends were not designed, and Purposes answered, by our Lord's Resurrection : But I do say and maintain, that the End assigned by you, was neither the principal one, nor at all intended in the Passage you have quoted to prove it.

You go on still very unfortunately in drawing Conclusions from this Text. By comparing it with these Words of St. Mark, *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature,* Mark xvi. 15. you collect, that to " preach the Gospel,

* See also *Mat.* xii. 38, 39, 40.

“ and to preach the Doctrines of Repentance
 “ and Remission of Sins, is in Christ's Account
 “ the same Thing.” For a Confutation of
 this, I refer to what is argued above, upon
 the Nature of the Gospel : And shall at present
 only observe the apparent Inconsistency of
 your Notion with our Saviour's Preaching ;
Repent ye, and believe the Gospel, Mark i. 15.

I PASS on to pag. 43. where I find you
 arguing thus : “ The Gospel of Jesus Christ
 “ is not an historical Account of Matters of
 “ Fact : As thus ; Christ suffered, died, rose
 “ from the Dead, ascended into Heaven.—
 “ *Luke vii. 22. Go your way and tell John,*
 “ *what Things ye have seen and heard, how*
 “ *that the Blind see, the Lame walk, the Lepers*
 “ *are cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are*
 “ *raised, to the Poor the Gospel is preached,*
 “ &c. Here we see, that the Gospel was
 “ preached to the Poor by Christ himself, ante-
 “ cedent to the Transactions I now refer to ;
 “ and therefore those Facts, or any Doctrines
 “ founded upon them, (such as that of Christ's
 “ Satisfaction, or that of his Intercession, or
 “ the like) cannot be any Part of that
 “ Gospel.”

To all this I oppose what follows : First,
 That the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is, in a
 certain Sense, Part of his Gospel, I suppose,
 hath been shewn above, by what I call and
 think

think positive Proof; even the exprefs Testimony of Holy Writ. At present therefore I shall only repeat some Words of the Apostle St. Paul, which are in the fullest manner declarative of this: *And we declare unto you glad Tidings, how that the Promise which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their Children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again,* Acts xiii. 32, 33. And why his Crucifixion, Death, and Ascension should not be deemed Part of his Gospel, as well as his Resurrection, those may give a good Reason who know one. Secondly, I agree that the Gospel was preached by Christ antecedent to his Crucifixion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. But what then? Will it follow in your Way, that these Transactions are no Part of his Gospel? No such Matter: You pretend, and undertake to prove, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the same with his Doctrine: But you will not, you cannot deny, that at the same time he preached his Doctrine, he also preached those very Events; foretelling them frequently and circumstantially. Where then is your Antecedency? Thirdly, This Argument of yours seems to recoil upon yourself: For if it be a fair and just Conclusion, that the Events above-mentioned are no Part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because the Preaching of that Gospel was prior to them, in respect of Time; it may by the same Method be equally concluded, that a capital Part of
 what

what you call the Doctrine of Christ, is no Part of his Gospel. Those Events (if we may credit the Scriptures of the New Testament) all happened soon after our Lord foretold them : But that fundamental, that characteristical Doctrine of Christ namely, a future Judgment to be executed by himself, and a State of Rewards and Punishments to ensue upon his Sentence ; that Doctrine, I say, is not yet fulfilled : And surely the Gospel was as much preached antecedent to that, as to the said Events. So that your own Argument, supposed to be conclusive, fights against you ; cutting off intirely your third doctrinal Proposition, and at the same time laying open and naked the Inconsistency of your Scheme.

BUT you have not yet done with this Text.
 “ Christ turned Water into Wine, gave Sight
 “ to the Blind, Feet to the Lame, Life to the
 “ Dead, &c. These, say you, are Facts, which
 “ though they were proper to awaken the At-
 “ tention of his Hearers, and to give Weight
 “ to his Preaching and Ministry, yet the
 “ History of them is no Part of his Gospel.—
 “ This is evident from the Text I before
 “ quoted, *Luke* vii. 22. Where the Working
 “ of Miracles, and preaching the Gospel to
 “ the Poor, are by Christ considered and repre-
 “ sented as two different Things,” pag. 44.

H

IT

It is indeed very true, that these miraculous Works are not Part of the Gospel of Christ, in its strict original Sense : But neither is his Doctrine any more so. What that Sense is, I suppose, I have shewn above, proving at the same time, that there is in Scripture a more large and general Acceptation of the Gospel. And in this latter Sense, the Miracles of our Lord are Part of the Gospel : And so is his Doctrine, and the other Circumstances relating to him.

I GO forward to pag. 45. where I find this surprising Passage: “ St. *James* (as in chap. v. “ 17, 18.) relates it as a Matter of Fact, viz. “ That *Elias* prayed earnestly, that it might “ not rain; and it rained not on the Earth by “ the Space of three Years and six Months. “ And he prayed again, and the Heavens gave “ Rain, and the Earth brought forth her Fruit. “ And according to St. *James*’s Representation “ of the Story, the Case seems to be, not only “ that this great Drought was brought upon “ the Land, in Consequence of the Prophet’s “ Prayer; but also, that the Prophet’s Prayer “ was the Produce of his Passion and Resentment. *Elias* was a Man subject to like “ Passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly, “ &c. Now, whether St. *James* received that “ Part of the History, viz. that the three “ Years and a half’s Drought upon the Land,
“ and

“ and then the giving of Rain, was the Effect
 “ of the Prophet’s Prayer; I say, whether
 “ St. *James* received this by Tradition from
 “ the *Jews*, (for it does not appear to be sup-
 “ ported by the History of those Times) or
 “ how he came by his Information, or
 “ whether it be true in Fact or not, it maketh
 “ nothing to us, &c.”

IN Defence of the sacred Writer, whom I
 take to be here grossly misrepresented, I have
 thus much to offer : First, St. *James*, I confess,
 doth declare this excessive Drought to have
 been occasioned by the Prophet’s Prayer; but
 I can by no means admit, that he is not therein
 supported by the History of those Times. We
 read in the first Book of *Kings*, chap. xvii. 1.
That Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the Inha-
bitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord
God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there
shall not be Dew nor Rain these Years, but ac-
ording to my Word. And, chap. xviii. 41, &c.
 that *Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat*
and drink; for there is a Sound of Abundance
of Rain. So *Ahab went up to eat, and to drink,*
and Elijah went up to the Top of Carmel; and
he cast himself down upon the Earth, and put
his Face between his Knees, and said to his Ser-
vant, Go up now, look toward the Sea. And
he went up, and looked, and said, There is no-
thing. And he said, Go again seven times.
And it came to pass at the seventh time, that

he said, Behold, there ariseth a little Cloud out of the Sea, like a Man's Hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy Chariot, and get thee down, that the Rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the Heaven was black with Clouds and Wind, and there was a great Rain. Now in all Writings whatsoever, there are, and must be many Things untold in Words, which yet the Circumstances of the Facts or Cases related necessarily suggest to the Reader. And this Observation is remarkably verified in the Historical Books of the Old Testament; where the Transactions of large Periods of Time, are told with peculiar Brevity. Let us apply it then to the Passages above-quoted: There we have a Prophet of the most High striking Awe into a wicked idolatrous King, with a Denunciation of a most destructive Drought; which, he says, speaking both of the Beginning and End together, shall be brought on and cease, according to his Word. And the intermediate History informs us, that it accordingly happened, and lasted some Years. The same Person is afterwards introduc'd, giving the Notice he had foretold of the Return of Rain; and then going up to the Top of Mount *Carmel*, and, with long and earnest Prayer, requesting the Accomplishment of his Promise: For this the Action and Circumstances seem plainly to denote. *Elijah went up to the Top of Carmel, and he cast himself down upon the Earth, and put his Face between*

between his Knees. This is the Eastern posture of Prayer; and the Continuance of the Prophet in that posture, while his Servant went and came seven times, shews his Prayer to have been long and earnest. From the whole then, we may collect some undeniable Facts and Circumstances, which will reduce the Matter in Dispute to a narrow Compass. They are these: The Prophet speaks of the Beginning and End of the Drought at the same time, and in the same Words: The End of it is manifestly represented, as preceded by his Word, and produced by his Prayer: There appears to be no Reason, why his Prayer was more necessary to take the Drought off, than to bring it on: The Historian is remarkably short and concise in his Narrations. These Particulars being admitted, (and how they can be fairly contested, I know not) the remaining Question will be only this: Whether they prove the Meaning of the History to be, that the Drought was brought on, and taken off, by the Efficacy of the Prophet's Prayer? And the Affirmative appears to me so very evident, that I will not add a Word more.

I DO not indeed find in the sacred History, that the Drought lasted three Years and six Months: But neither do I find any thing inconsistent with it. The Text says, that *the Word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third Year, saying, Go shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send Rain upon the Earth,* 1 Kings xviii. 1.

It

It might be late in the third Year, when the Prophet receiv'd his Orders : And the Matters related in the History, from that Time to the sending of Rain upon the Earth, may well be supposed to have completed the three Years and six Months. *Elijah* goes to meet *Obadiah*, who was roaming about the Country in quest of Fountains of Water, and Brooks. Then he goes to *Abab* : And *Abab* at his Instance, summons all *Israel*, and the four hundred and fifty Prophets of *Baal*, and the four hundred Prophets of the Groves, to Mount *Carmel*; which, in the Nature of the Thing, must have been a Work of considerable Time. Then follows the Story of the Trial, by Sacrifice, of the idolatrous Prophets, and of the Prophet of the Lord ; together with *Elijah's* Victory, and the Slaughter of the idolatrous Prophets. And some time after that, *Elijah* gives Notice to *Abab* of the Approach of Rain ; and goes up to the Top of Mount *Carmel*, to request it by Prayer of the Lord. These Transactions, I apprehend, prove at least, that the History doth not contradict the Apostle. And tho' it doth not determine precisely the Duration of the Drought ; yet is there no Occasion to call in Tradition to support St. *James* : That may be done, if it be at all necessary, in a Way far more satisfactory. For there might have been authentick Records, or written History of the intire Transaction, extant in his Days. Throughout the holy Scriptures frequent References
are

are made to Books or Histories then in Being, which are not come down to us: Such are the Book of *Jasher*, *Joshua* x. 13. and the Book of the Acts of *Solomon*, *1 Kings* xi. 41. and many others. But to make short: The Certainty of the Continuance of the Drought for three Years and six Months, according to St. *James's* Account, is irrefragably proved by a Testimony, which, I suppose, you will not call in question; I mean the Testimony of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who speaks thus: *Many Widows were in Israel in the Days of Elias, when the Heaven was shut up three Years and six Months*, Luke iv. 25.

SECONDLY, I cannot allow that St. *James* represents the Prophet's Prayer to be the Produce of his Passion and Resentment, without giving up all just Rules of Language and Criticism. This, Sir, I take to be incontestably an Error, and an Error so extraordinary, so much out of the way, that I cannot even guess how you could fall into it. The Words of St. *James* are these: *Elias was a Man subject to like Passions as we are*. How could you imagine, that the Apostle describes in these Words a Man angry and resentful? In our Mother-tongue, would any body so characterize a passionate Person? And if he should, could he be understood so to mean; to intend the particular Passion of Anger and Resentment, by mentioning several indeterminate Passions?

But

But indeed Points of this Nature cannot be rightly decided without consulting the Original. The Word in the Greek Text is *ὁμοιοπαθής, a Word, I believe, never used by any Author to denote Passion and Resentment. When applied to Men, it signifies, that they are subject to all the Passions, Appetites and Affections; or to all the Evils, Sufferings, Wants and Infirmities of human Nature, to Sickness, Pain, Poverty, Death, and the like: so that to say, a Man is ὁμοιοπαθής ἡμῖν, is as much as to call him a mere Man. I can't help wondering, that a Passage in the *Acts*, exactly parallel to this, did not occur to you: † *Sirs, Why do ye these Things? We also are Men of like Passions with you*, *Acts* xiv. 15. They are the Words of *Barnabas* and *Paul* to the Inhabitants of *Lystra*; who supposed them to be Gods in human Shapes, and were going to offer Sacrifice to them as such. Think you, that the Apostles intended by these Words (in which we have the same Phrase, as in the Epistle of St. *James*) to represent themselves to the People of *Lystra* to be Men passionate and resentful? Or rather, is it not as plain as the plainest Truth, that they declare themselves thereby to be no Gods; to be as much Men as they were? It would be an easy Matter to multiply Proofs and Examples; but surely it would be

* Ἡλίας ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθής ἡμῖν.

† Ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμὲν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι.

arrant Trifling in a Case so very evident. I shall only just observe, what a fine Reasoner you make of St. *James*, when you explain him as above. He tells us, *the effectual, fervent* (rather the intense, the earnest, ἐνεργουμένη) *Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much*; and he gives the Prophet *Elijah* as an Instance of it: But, methinks, it should seem a most odd Way of proving the Efficacy of a righteous Man's Prayer, to say that *Elias* was a Man passionate and resentful, and in the Heat of his Wrath prayed that it might not rain, and it rained not, &c. You must excuse me, Sir, if I cannot allow such a Blunder as this to belong to an *Apostle of Jesus Christ*.

I PASS on to pag. 48. where I find you charging St. *Paul* with certain Opinions or Doctrines, which you suppose to be advanced in his eleventh Chapter to the *Romans*. I think you mistaken in every one of them: As I shall endeavour to shew, by severally considering them in the Order they stand.

“ St. *Paul* seems to be of Opinion, say you,
 “ that the Gospel being preached to the *Gen-*
 “ *tiles* was owing to the Generality of the
 “ *Jews* rejecting it, as appears from his Argu-
 “ ment and Reasonings, *Rom. xi.* from Verse
 “ the 10th to the End of the Chapter.”

I

Now

Now that the Messiah was to be a Light to lighten the *Gentiles*, or that the Gospel was to be preached to them, the Prophecies of the Old Testament do in general Terms frequently declare (*Acts* xv. 15. and xxvi. 22, 23.) ; and that they do so, St. Paul himself says, and supposes in several Places of his Epistles ; particularly in these: *The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all Nations be blessed, Gal. iii. 8. As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my People, which were not my People ; and her Beloved, which was not beloved, Rom. ix. 25. According to the Revelation of the Mystery —by the Scriptures of the Prophets—made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith, xvi. 25, 26.* Add, that our Saviour commanded his Apostles to go into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature ; and that St. Paul, who received the Gospel immediately from him, could not but know that Command. Consistently then with all this, how could the Apostle say, as he does in his eleventh Chapter to the *Romans*, that *through their (the Jews) Fall, Salvation is come unto the Gentiles?* ver. 11. *That Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in?* ver. 25. *That the Gentiles have now obtained Mercy through their (the Jews) Unbelief?* ver. 30. How, I say, are these Things to be reconciled together ?

together? The Answer is obvious: By the Declarations of the Prophets, as well as by our Lord's express Command, the Gospel was first to be preached to the *Jews*: It was accordingly offered to them; but they violently opposed and rejected it: And their Blindness and Obstinacy put the Preaching of the Gospel out of Course; so that it was sooner published to the *Gentiles*, than otherwise it would have been. This is not mere Invention and Hypothesis, but real Matter of Fact, thoroughly supported, I think, by the History of the Acts of the Apostles; as the following Quotations may serve to shew: *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: But seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting Life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, * I have set thee to be a Light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth, Acts xiii. 46, 47. Paul was pressed in Spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was Christ: And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his Raiment, and said unto them, Your Blood be upon your own Heads; I am clean: From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles, xviii. 5, 6. And it came to pass, that when I (Paul) was come again to Jerusalem,*

* *Isaiah* xlix. 6.

even while I prayed in the Temple, I was in a Trance, and saw him, saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy Testimony concerning me.—And he said unto me, Depart: For I will send thee far hence, unto the Gentiles, xxii. 17, 18, 21. I (Paul) was not disobedient unto the heavenly Vision; but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the Coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance, xxvi. 19, 20. If you will please to compare these Passages with the eleventh Chapter to the Romans, I cannot doubt, but you will perceive, that St. Paul does not there mean, that the Unbelief of the Jews was the Reason why the Gospel was at all preached to the Gentiles; but only that it was the Occasion of its being so early preached to them.

SAINT PAUL indeed, mentioning in his Epistles the Preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, calls it *the Mystery*—*which in other Ages was not made known unto the Sons of Men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, Ephes. iii. 3, 5. The Mystery which hath been hid from Ages, and from Generations, but now is made manifest unto his Saints, Colos. i. 26.* But the Apostle, I apprehend, by these and the like Expressions, does not mean the bare Preaching of the Gospel

to the *Gentiles*; but the particular Circumstances, the Time, the Occasion, the Manner of it; this Circumstance especially, that the *Gentiles* should be incorporated into one and the same Church with the *Jews*, and partake equally with them of the Privileges and Benefits of the Gospel. These Things were really a *Mystery hid from Ages and Generations, and then first made manifest to his Saints.*

You go on in these Words: “And it seems
 “ to be his Opinion likewise, that it was a
 “ Part of the original Scheme of Providence,
 “ and a Thing intended by God, that the Body
 “ of the *Jewish* Nation should thus reject the
 “ Gospel, and thereby give him an Occasion
 “ of offering it to the *Gentiles*; or at least,
 “ that he, foreknowing the *Jews* would act
 “ thus, takes an Occasion from that Circum-
 “ stance, (being as it were affronted with, and
 “ resenting their Ingratitude) to offer the Go-
 “ spel to the *Gentiles*, which otherwise he
 “ would not have done.”

SAINT PAUL does indeed teach, that the Publication of the Gospel to the *Gentiles* was foretold in the Prophecies of the Old Testament; and he quotes *Moses* and *Esaias*, as describing its successful Propagation among them, and the Anger and Envy of the *Jews* upon that Account (*Rom. x. 19, 20.*). But where, I pray, does he say, or suppose, that it
 was

was Part of the original Scheme of Providence, and a Thing intended by God, that the Body of the *Jewish* Nation should reject the Gospel; insomuch that God would not have offered the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, if the *Jews* had received it? Nothing of all this can I discover in any of his Writings, but much to the contrary. As you impute this Opinion to St. *Paul* without pointing out the particular Places of the Chapter, from which you collect it; I can only guess, that you ground it chiefly upon these Words: *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the Election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded: According as it is written, God hath given them the Spirit of Slumber, Eyes that they should not see, and Ears that they should not hear, to this Day*, Rom. xi. 7, 8. But might not the Apostle, with the utmost Propriety, style those few *Jews* the Election, who were rightly disposed and qualified to embrace the Gospel, and did embrace it, without intending that they were necessitated to do so by any particular Decree or Fore-appointment of God? Might he not justly say, that those *Jews* were hardened, or hardened by God, who had taken Occasion from his Forbearance and Long-suffering to harden themselves, and had so far abused the Means and Opportunities he had afforded for converting them to Christianity, as violently and obstinately to oppose it?

BUT

BUT farther : Had it been St. *Paul's* Opinion, that it was " Part of the original Scheme of Providence, and a Thing intended by God, " that the Body of the *Jewish* Nation should " reject the Gospel," would he, think you, have quoted these Words from *Isaiab* against those *Jews*? *All Day long I have stretched forth my Hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying People*, Rom. x. 21. Would he have spoken of 'em thus? *Because of Unbelief they were broken off—And—if they bide not still in Unbelief, shall be grafted in*, Rom. xi. 20, 23. *My Heart's Desire and Prayer to God for Israel, is, that they might be saved*, Rom. x. 1. *Behold therefore the Goodness and Severity of God : On them which fell, Severity ; but towards thee Goodness, if thou continue in his Goodness : Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*, Rom. xi. 22. Surely all this, and much more that might be produced, clearly implies, that the Disobedience and Unbelief of the *Jews* was their own free and voluntary Act. You may see therefore, that the Apostle could not be of the Opinion you impute to him, without manifest Self-contradiction. This, I own, might have come from any raw untutor'd Scribler, but is altogether unsuitable to the Character of St. *Paul*, who was able to propagate the Gospel in the most flourishing Seats of Learning and Science, and is ranked with
the

the top Orators of *Greece*, by that most judicious Critic *Longinus*.

YOU proceed in your Charge thus: “ St. Paul also seems to be of Opinion, that God “ by this Method of his Providence intended “ not only to shew Kindness to the *Gentiles*, “ but also to mortify the *Jews*, and provoke “ them to Jealousy; which was likely to be “ the Case, when they saw the *Gentiles*, who “ were a People whom they very much “ despised, taken into divine Favour, and “ made their Rivals.”

’TIS true, St. Paul says, *through their (the Jews) Fall Salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to Jealousy*: But, I think, you grievously misunderstand him, when you suppose him to mean, that God, by favouring the *Gentiles* in that Manner, intended merely to vex or mortify the *Jews*. This, I apprehend, is so far from being the Case, that it is undoubtedly the Doctrine of St. Paul, that the Preaching of the Gospel to the *Gentiles* was designed for the Conversion of the *Jews*. Hear the Apostle himself: *For I would not, Brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this Mystery—that Blindness in Part is happened to Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, Rom. xi. 25, 26. For as ye (Gentiles) in Times past have not believed God, yet have*
now

now obtained Mercy through their Unbelief? Even so have these (the Jews) also now not believed, that through your Mercy they also may obtain Mercy, ver. 30, 31. Had you attended to these Passages, you could not well have thought it St. Paul's Sense, that Salvation was come to the Gentiles merely to mortify the Jews. His Expression is, εἰς τὸ παραζηλῶσαι αὐτούς; and it signifies, to provoke them to Emulation or Imitation; to raise such Dispositions and Resolutions in them, as Men generally feel, when they perceive themselves in any way excelled by others: Both the Argument, and the Use of the Phrase concur to prove this. The Apostle has the same Verb in this Sense a few Verses below: *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine Office; if by any means I may provoke to Emulation them which are my Flesh,* (εἰπως παραζηλώσω με τὴν σάρκα) *and might save some of them,* ver. 13, 14. Understand St. Paul in this Sense, and, I trust, you will find his whole Reasoning to be just, strong, and worthy of its Author.

THE last Instance I shall mention, is at pag. 80. in these Words: "*And behold, I send the Promise of my Father unto you, but tarry ye in the City of Jerusalem, until ye shall be endued with Power from on high. This Promise of the Father, or the enduing them with Power from on High, as it con-*

K

" lifted

“ fisted in the working Miracles like as Christ
 “ had done before, and to answer the same
 “ End ; so it was made good to them at the
 “ Feast of Pentecost following.”

STRANGE Prejudice ; or amazing Care-
 lesness ! For there is not, I think, any one
 thing in the whole sacred Scripture more fully
 and clearly expressed, than that this Promise of
 the Father was the Holy Ghost. *And being
 assembled together with them, (the Apostles) com-
 manded them, that they should not depart from
 Jerusalem, but wait for the Promise of the
 Father ; which, saith he, ye have heard of me.
 For John truly baptized with Water ; but ye
 shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many
 Days hence, Acts i. 4, 5. And when the Day
 of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with
 one Accord in one Place. And suddenly there
 came a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing
 mighty Wind, and it filled all the House where
 they were sitting. And there appeared unto
 them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it
 sat upon each of them : And they were all filled
 with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with
 other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance.
 — This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we
 all are Witnesses. Therefore, being by the Right-
 hand of God exalted, and having received of
 the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he
 hath shed forth this, which ye now see and
 bear, Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 32, 33. Can Words
 be*

be plainer than these? Can any declare more expressly, that the Promise of the Father sent to the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, was the Holy Ghost; that the Effect immediately produced by it, was the Preaching of the Gospel in various Languages; and consequently that the Intent of it was the better and speedier Propagation of the Gospel among all Nations? You suppose, that the Promise of the Father "consisted in working Miracles, like as Christ had done before:" But I must tell you, Sir, that the Apostles had the Power of working Miracles long before; even when they were first sent forth by our Saviour to preach the Gospel: I appeal to the Evangelists: *And when he had called unto him his twelve Disciples he gave them Power against unclean Spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Disease.— And as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the Sick, cleanse the Lepers, raise the Dead, cast out Devils, Mat. x. 1, 7, 8. Then he called his twelve Disciples together, and gave them Power and Authority over all Devils, and to cure Diseases, Luke ix. 1.*

So much for your Comments upon Holy Scripture. How worthy they are of a good Scholar, or a good Reasoner, or an Asserter of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, I submit to your own Conscience. To inveigh and aggravate would misbecome me, who am contend-

ing for Truth, not for Victory : But, in Justice to the whole Christian Ministry, I must beg leave to offer your own Interpretations of Scripture, as a sufficient Confutation of the following Paragraph of your Book : “ Tho’ great Learning, tedious Study, &c. may be necessary to render Men capable of perverting it, (the Gospel) and making it subservient to other and contrary Purposes, than what it was intended for : Yet these are not necessary to render Men capable of undertaking it themselves, nor yet to qualify them to preach it to others,” pag. 85.

HITHERTO I have opposed your Scheme, your Notions, your Interpretations: But I can at length come so far to an Agreement with you, as to close my Letter with the same Words you close your VIth Section; freely acknowledging that you have proved, beyond all Contradiction, “ That every thing is not Christ’s Gospel, which weak, or ignorant, or artful Men have taken upon them to call by that Name.”

I am, SIR,

Your sincere Well-wisher,

and humble Servant,

R. P.



BOOKS Printed for JOHN STAGG,
in *Westminster-Hall*.

1. **A** SYSTEM of English Ecclesiastical Law, extracted from the Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani, of the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London, for the Use of young Students in the Universities, who are designed for Holy Orders. By Richard Grey, D. D. Rector of Hinton, in Northamptonshire. The Third Edition. Price 6 s.

2. A New and Easy Method of Learning Hebrew without Points : To which is annexed, by way of Praxis, The Book of Proverbs, divided according to the Metre ; with the Masoretical Reading in Roman Letters, the interlinear Version of Santes, Pagninus, &c. A Grammatical Analysis, and short Notes Critical and Explanatory. The Whole design'd for the more speedy and perfect Attainment of the Hebrew Tongue. By Richard Grey, D. D. Price bound 6 s. 6 d.

3. Memoria Technica ; or, A new Method of Artificial Memory, applied to, and exemplified in Chronology, History, Geography, Astronomy : Also Jewish, Grecian, and Roman Coins, Weights, and Measures, &c. with Tables proper to the respective Sciences, and memorial Lines, adapted
to

BOOKS printed for J. STAGG.

to each Table. By *Richard Grey*, D. D. The Third Edition. Price 3s. 6d.

4. The Duty and proper Conduct of the Clergy under the ill Treatment of their Enemies. A Sermon preached at the Visitation held at *Towcester*, July 2, 1736. by the Right Reverend Father in God *Robert*, Lord Bishop of *Peterborough*. By *Richard Grey*, D. D. The Second Edition. Price 6d.

5. Tabula exhibens Paradigmata Verborum Hebraicorum Regularium & Irregularium per omnes Conjugationes, Modos, Tempora & Personas, quam in Gratiam Juventutis Phil-Hebrææ, plenius & accuratius excudi fecit *R. Gray*, S. T. P. Price 1s. 6d.

6. The miserable and distracted State of Religion in *England*, upon the Downfal of the Church Establishment. Price 1s. 6d.

7. Separation disapprov'd and condemn'd, by a Letter of the Presbyterian Ministers of the City of *London*, presented the 1st of Jan. 1645. to the Reverend Assembly of Divines, sitting at *Westminster* by Authority of Parliament, and by twenty eminent Divines, most (if not all) of them Members of the *Westminster* Assembly, in their Sermons before the two Houses of Parliament, on solemn Occasions, between the Years 1641, and 1648. Faithfully Collected, and Published in the Year 1670. and now Reprinted. Price 1s.